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ABSTRACT

A study hypothesized that significant relationships exist between personality traits and success in student teaching, and will be manifest between those students demonstrating definitive levels of personality trait characteristics identified as being related to success, and those who do not. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) was administered 6 weeks into the student teaching experience. The four scales available from data produced by the instrument included scores on a continuum for extraversion-introversion, sensation-intuition, thinking-feeling, and judgment-perception. Success in student teaching was identified by the cooperating teacher's evaluation of the student teacher. The four continuous scores from the MBTI were compared for strength of relationship to success in student teaching at the elementary and secondary levels. Analysis of the data indicated that personality trait characteristics correlated significantly with student teaching success. Of the four scores available from the MBTI, judgment was related to secondary school student teaching success, while sensing and judgment related to success at the elementary level. At the secondary level, the extraversion trait indicated a trend toward a positive relationship to success, and the introversion trait indicated a positive relationship at the elementary level. (JD)

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THE EFFECTS OF PERSONALITY ON SUCCESS IN STUDENT TEACHING

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The Effects of Personality on Success in Student Teaching

The "age of accountability" has ushered into the school system not only the demand for documented pupil success, but quantifiable, observable, documentable teacher success as well. Would that teacher success were that explicitly quantifiable or documentable. It is not, but the efforts in research in what direction have not yielded unimportant findings. They are directional, if not absolute, in an effort to define teacher success and its complicated components.

Who are the successful teachers? Why are they labeled as such? Is there some magic curriculum that produces these teachers? Some degree program? A special series of seminars, perhaps? Indeed, all these influencing factors refine a successful teacher, but research is indicating that a measure of success in the classroom is inherent to the person of the teacher: his/her personality, his/her attitudes, self-concept, expectations of self and others, perceptions of life and learning.

Previous research has described behavior patterns demonstrated by successful teachers. Meisgeier described them as well adjusted, emotionally stable, and able to encounter difficult special class situations. They

possessed physical energy, vitality, and enthusiasm necessary to meet special classroom demands. Finally, they obtained high scores on measures of scholastic achievement and ability (Headrick, 1971).

Regarded as utmost in importance (Kirk, 1962), the personality of the teacher influences that teachers' effectiveness in the classroom. Other research relating the role of personality to various academic pursuits cites differences in personality as measured by the Q-Sort, D-Scale, C.P.I. and the 16 PF between students receiving highest and lowest ratings in both student teaching and professional teaching. Although the results did not reach the desired level of significance, trends indicated that the more successful group had a good self-image. The less successful teachers seemed more independent, but scored lower in measures of trust, self-control, and responsibility (Mundel-Atherstone, 1980).

A second study, correlating the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator with success on the National Teacher's Examination (NTE) noted significant relationships between success on that instrument and the sensing-intuitive dimension of the MBTI. The study concluded that most teachers are classified as sensing types and thus more inclined to score lower on standardized examinations, like the NTE. The study also confirms the importance of examining the interaction between academic qualifications and personality (Pratt, 1981).

Thus, it is a feasible hypothesis that personality is a contributing factor in teacher success or failure. The

issue then becomes a question of relationships: to what extent do these personality factors influence teacher performance? Are personality characteristics in the classroom critical enough to be causal factors of teacher success or failure? Or, if we cannot be that finite, can we describe relationships between personality trait characteristics and teacher behaviors perceived by research to contribute to success in the classroom? Finally, is there a distinction between the optimal personality for secondary teachers and the optimal personality for elementary teachers?

From this background and series of questions, the following hypotheses are formulated for the basis of this study:

H_1 There are significant relationships between personality trait characteristics and success in student teaching at the elementary and secondary levels.

H_2 Significant differences in success in student teaching will be manifest between those students demonstrating definitive levels of personality trait characteristics identified as being related to success and those students demonstrating definitive levels of personality trait characteristics identified as not being related to success at the elementary and secondary levels.

METHOD The subjects who voluntarily contributed data to this study were those students who were engaged in student teaching in the spring and fall of 1982.

The variables measured were personality trait characteristics identified by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and success in student teaching identified by the professional classroom teacher's evaluation of the student teacher assigned to him or her.

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) was administered six weeks into the student teaching experience during a regular session of student teaching seminar. The four scales available from data produced by the instrument include scores on a continuum for extraversion-introversion, sensation-intuition, thinking-feeling, and judgment-perception. The four scales are further described as follows:

Extraverted (E) - Introverted (I): The direction of of interest. Does the subject's interest flow mainly to the outer world of actions, objects, and persons (E) or to the inner world of concepts, and ideas (I)?

Sensing (S) - Intuitive (N): How situations are perceived and experienced. Does the subject attach more importance to the immediate realities of direct experience (S) or to the inferred meanings, relationships and possibilities of experience (N)?

Thinking (T) - Feeling (F): Judgmental preferences. In making judgments, does the subject rely more on logical order and cause and effect (T) or on priorities based on personal importance and values (F)?

Judging (J) - Perceptive (P): Life style. Does the subject prefer to live in the judging attitude, planning, ordering, and organizing his world - deciding what needs to be done and systematically attempting to do it (J) or in the perceptive attitude spontaneously, curiously awaiting events and adapting to them(P) (Myers, 1962).

Continuous scores indicate a preference for one trait or the other of each pair and the strength of that preference, ranging from a score of 33 for extraversion, sensing, thinking, and judging preferences along a continuum to 161 for introversion, intuitive, feeling, and perceptive preferences (see Figure 1).

EXTRAVERSION	47 - - - - - - - - - -	159	INTROVERSION
SENSATION	33 - - - - - - - - - -	151	INTUITION
THINKING	39 - - - - - - - - - -	151	FEELING
JUDGMENT	45 - - - - - - - - - -	161	PERCEPTION

Figure 1. Range of Continuous Scores for the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers, 1962).

Reliability of the instrument from a number of studies is described as quite adequate; validity research labels the instrument as a "reasonably valid instrument which is potentially useful for a variety of purposes" (Carlyn, 1977).

The instrument used to identify the level of success attained by the student teachers was the Evaluation and Profile incorporated into the evaluation system for student teachers in the area for a number of years. The Likert scale measure has provisions for evaluation of seventeen

categories of teacher performance and behavior. Ranking student teacher performance in each of the categories on a scale of "weak, average, strong, superior", the professional teachers submitted their findings at the end of the field experience. Rankings were then quantified by assigning number scores of weak = 2, average =3, strong =4, and superior =5. A tally of the number scores yielded a range of 32 to 85, the higher numbers indicating greater success in the classroom. The data was then subjected to the various appropriate statistical applications.

DATA ANALYSIS

Initial data analysis required the identification of those personality trait characteristics, if any, that correlated significantly to success in the student teaching experience at the secondary and elementary level as demonstrated in this subject group. To facilitate this analysis, the four continuous scores from the MBTI were compared for strength of relationship to success in student teaching at the two levels. Tables 1 and 2 chart the descriptive and correlational statistics for secondary and elementary student teachers.

At the secondary level, the perception personality trait was found to correlate negatively with student teaching success. ($P = .05$). The introversion personality trait indicated a trend to negative correlation. These two findings support a positive relationship between extraversion and judgment to

TABLE 1

Descriptive and Correlational Statistics for the MBTI and Success in Secondary Student Teaching

Personality Trait Characteristic	Success X = 71.20 SD = 8.19
Extraversion-Introversion	
X = 90.57 SD = 28.85	r = -.16
Sensing-Intuition	
X = 95.78 SD = 26.23	r = -.09
Thinking-Feeling	
X =114.25 SD = 20.35	r = .10
Judgment-Perception	
X = 94.80 SD = 28.79	r = -.26*

N = 69
P .05

TABLE 2

Descriptive and Correlational Statistics for the MBTI and Success in Elementary Student Teaching

Personality Trait Characteristic	Success X = 74.31 SD = 9.19
Extraversion-Introversion	
X = 91.06 SD = 27.45	r = .15
Sensing-Intuition	
X = 86.14 SD = 26.80	r =-.29*
Thinking-Feeling	
X =122.33 SD = 15.02	r =-.06
Judgment-Perception	
X = 86.97 SD = 24.00	r =-.38**

N = 70
*P = .05
**P = .01

student teaching success at the secondary level.

At the elementary level, the intuitive personality trait was found to correlate negatively with student teaching success. ($P \leq .05$). Additionally, the perception personality trait was found to correlate negatively with success at this level ($P \leq .01$). Further, the introversion personality trait indicated a trend to positive correlation. These three findings support a positive relationship between introversion, sensing, and judgment with success in student teaching at the elementary level.

To observe the overall effect of all of the personality traits in combination to success in student teaching, the data was submitted to multiple regression. Results of that analysis are noted in Tables 3 and 4. It is observed that the combination effect of traits yielded a multiple R of .39 for secondary student teachers, accounting for 15% of the variance in their success ($P = .03$). It was observed of elementary student teachers, that the combination effect of traits yielded a multiple R of .42, accounting for 18% of the variance in success for that group ($P = .01$). With these findings, H_1 was accepted.

From the acceptance of H_1, it was appropriate to conduct an analysis of variance in success from those student teachers manifesting definitive levels of opposing traits, these being one standard deviation above and below the mean for the subject group. For the secondary student teachers, the analysis would be between those students manifesting definitive judgment

TABLE 3

Multiple Regression Statistics for the MBTI and Success in Secondary Student Teaching

Coefficient of Multiple Correlation	.39
R Square	.15*
Standard Error	7.84
Regression Sum of Squares	692.59
Total Sum of Squares	3937.07
Degrees of Freedom	4 and 64
F-Ratio	2.81
Probability	.03

TABLE 4

Multiple Regression Statistics for the MBTI and Success in Elementary Student Teaching

Coefficient of Multiple Correlation	.42
R Square	.18*
Standard Error	8.65
Regression Sum of Squares	1055.88
Total Sum of Squares	4867.76
Degrees of Freedom	4 and 65
F-Ratio	3.52
Probability	.01

and extraversion traits as compared to teachers manifesting definitive perceptive and introversion traits. Results of that analysis are noted in Tables 5 and 6 for secondary student teachers. Findings indicated that those student teachers with definitive traits of extraversion and judgment measured significantly higher in success than did those student teachers with definitive traits of perception and introversion ($P \geq .01$).

Analysis of variance was also conducted on the elementary subject group manifesting traits at the definitive level that were positively identified as related to student teaching success, those being introversion, sensing, and judgement. Success in this group was compared to success among those student teachers manifesting traits at the definitive level of extraversion, intuition, and perception. Results of that analysis are noted in Tables 7 and 8 for elementary teachers. A significant difference in success level between these two groups was observed at the $P = .001$ level. With these findings, H_2 was accepted.

DISCUSSION Personality trait characteristics were found to correlate significantly with student teaching success. Of the four continuous scores available from the MBTI, the one indicating a level of preference for judgment was significantly related to secondary student teaching success. The extraversion trait indicated a trend toward a positive relationship. Of the four continuous scores available, two were identified as being significantly related to elementary student teaching

TABLE 5

Descriptive Statistics: Means and Standard Deviations for Success in Secondary Student Teachers Manifesting Definitive Extraversion-Judgment and Definitive Introversion-Perception

Group	N	X	SD
Definitive E-J	12	78.5	7.32
Definitive I-P	6	68.17	8.18

TABLE 6

Analysis of Variance: Summary Table for Secondary Student Teaching Success for Definitive Extraversion-Judgment and Definitive Introversion-Perception

Source	SS	DF	MS	F
Total	1353.02	17		
Between	427.252	1	427.252	7.38*
Within	925.763	16	57.86	

*P = .01

TABLE 7

Descriptive Statistics: Means and Standard Deviations for Success in Elementary Student Teachers Manifesting Definitive Introversion-Sensing-Judgment and Extraversion-Intuition-Perception

Group	N	X	SD
Definitive I-S-J	13	80.31	3.59
Definitive E-N-P	6	67.5	10.77

TABLE 8

Analysis of Variance: Summary Table for Elementary Student Teaching Success for Definitive Introversion-Sensing-Judgment and Extraversion-Intuition-Perception

Source	SS	DF	MS	F
Total	1407.58	18		
Between	673.217	1	673.217	15.58*
Within	734.363	17	43.20	

*P = .001

success, those being sensing and judgment. The introversion trait indicated a trend toward positive relationship. The combination of traits yielded a significant effect on the variance of student teaching success, 15% at the secondary level and 18% at the elementary level. Finally, significant differences between groups of student teachers manifesting traits shown to be positively related to success and those student teachers manifesting opposing traits were noted in their levels of success in the experience.

These findings can be of benefit in advisement and teacher pre-service programs in helping students opt for teaching at the secondary or the elementary levels. Further, an awareness of personality trait preferences and their relationships to success in student teaching could better prepare students for their student teaching experiences. This critical training period should be as positive, reinforcing, and as constructively critical as possible. To know one's personality trait preferences and the probable role they can contribute to the student teaching experience is as much of teacher preparation as any professional competency.

This study should not be used to substantiate the argument that good teachers are born and not made. While these findings do support a significant relationship between the person of the teacher and success in the classroom, they also leave a large margin of variance in success that must be attributed to other factors, notably teacher-training,

GPA, previous teaching experience, and certainly teaching environment which would include administrative support during initial teaching experiences. While, based on these data, the significant role of personality in teaching is substantiated, that single role cannot eliminate the need for attention to other factors, but because that role is identified as significant, it cannot be ignored either. Teacher training should identify student teacher personality, acknowledge its role in student teaching success, and guide teacher trainees toward an awareness of both factors.

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